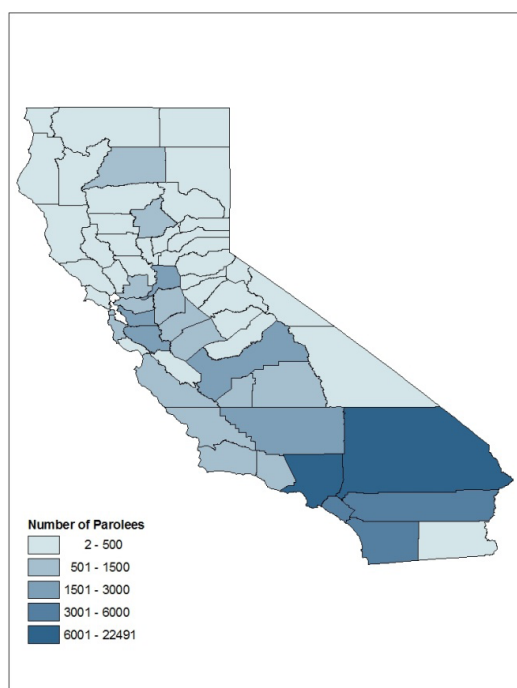


Appendix I—The Important Role of the Community in the Correctional Process

Communities are an often overlooked contributor to continuing recidivism by offenders newly released from prison or parole. Attempts to reduce risk of future criminal behaviors must reach beyond the walls of the correctional agency and embrace the communities from which offenders come and to which they will eventually return.

Communities consist of residents, businesses, families, schools, religious leaders, and others and often define the range of acceptable behavior for the people living within them. Highly disadvantaged communities tend to suffer from more violence and disorder due to sociological, political, and economic factors. An analysis of communities in California shows that there are some communities that have higher numbers of offenders than others. Figure H-1 provides a graphical representation of the number of prisoners released by the CDCR and the counties to which they returned.

Figure I-1: Number of Prisoner Releases by California County, 2006
Source: CDCR



An analysis of the data presented in Figure H-1 shows that a significant proportion of California's prisoners are released in the southern counties of the state. Table H-1, which provides the distribution of all California parolees by county, supports this conclusion.^{am}

^{am} The Expert Panel wishes to thank John Hipp, Ph.D. at the Center for Evidence-Based Corrections at UC Irvine for providing the maps and tables used in this appendix.

Table I-1: Percentage of Parolees by California County, July 1, 2006

County	% of CA Parolees
Los Angeles	30.82%
San Bernardino	8.57%
San Diego	7.10%
Riverside	6.42%
Orange	5.90%
Sacramento	4.07%
Fresno	3.87%
Santa Clara	3.79%
Kern	3.70%
Alameda	3.32%
All Others	25.76%
Source: CDCR	

Summary of California Community Data

- A relatively large number of parolees return to a small number of counties.** The four southern counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Riverside accounted for over half of all parolees (53 percent) on July 1, 2006. The county of Los Angeles alone accounted for fully 30 percent of these parolees.
- There is some evidence of geographic clustering of parolees in Los Angeles County.** There is some evidence of clustering in the central and south-central parts of the county. In the county overall, the top 1% of the census tracts contained 8.6% of the parolees on July 1, 2006. The top 5% of the census tracts contained 23.5% of the parolees. The top 10% of the census tracts contained 36.5% of the parolees.
- Prisoners are returning to neighborhoods with higher levels of social and economic disadvantage.** In Los Angeles County, the census tracts with high numbers of parolees have poverty rates over double that of tracts with low numbers of parolees. These high-parolee tracts also have double the proportion single parent households, double the unemployment rate, 43% lower median income, and over double the violent crime rate of low-parolee tracts.

This trend is not unique to California. Eric Cadora and his team from the Justice Mapping Center have studied carefully the migration patterns of offenders in, out, and back into specific high density neighborhoods using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in several American communities (see www.justicemapping.org). What is clear is that the residential origins of offender populations on probation, in prison, and on parole are not random, but highly concentrated—even more so than crime—in specific neighborhoods and, literally, specific streets.

These high-concentration communities need our concerted attention to improve public safety and community well-being. Research has shown that the key to reducing violent crime is collective efficacy, which is defined as social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good. Investing in these communities will reduce the demands on the state for correctional and health services by reducing the criminal toxicity of these communities and replacing it with fortitude and capability to address the full range of negative social indicators from violence to unwed pregnancy to high school drop outs (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997). We believe that California should start directing some of its attention and dollars to develop programs and services that will help targeted communities become places that stop producing new offenders and start preventing released offenders from returning to prison. In the long run, we believe that this will help reduce California's recidivism to an even greater degree than spending money on the correctional system will.

